

About the 'Strengthening Families' Approach

Across the country, early care and education programs are using the Strengthening Families approach* to build protective factors in families by providing parents with what they need to parent effectively, even under stress. Research indicates that when these **five protective factors** are present and robust in a family, the likelihood of child abuse and neglect diminishes:

- **Parental Resilience:** The ability to cope and bounce back from all types of challenges.
- **Social Connections:** Friends, family members, neighbors and other members of a community who provide emotional support and concrete assistance to parents.
- **Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development:** Accurate information about raising young children, appropriate expectations for their behavior and knowledge of alternative discipline techniques.
- **Concrete Support in Times of Need:** Connections to resources and services to meet the needs of families through support like Medicaid, job training, transportation and play and recreation groups.
- **Children's Social and Emotional Competence:** A child's ability to interact positively with others and communicate his or her emotions.

* More information about the Strengthening Families approach is available from the Center for the Study of Social Policy by visiting www.strengtheningfamilies.net.

Making It Happen...

This initiative is funded by a grant from the **Hamilton County Family and Children First Council** to the **Consortium for Resilient Young Children**.

It is being implemented through a collaboration with the following partner agencies: **Centerpoint Health, The Children's Home of Cincinnati, 4C for Children** and **Santa Maria Community Services**.

4C for Children is providing project coordination and serving as the fiscal agent.

For more information, contact project manager Carolyn Brinkmann at cbrinkmann@4cforchildren.org or 513-758-1314.



Hamilton County
Family and Children First Council

the Consortium
for resilient young children



Strengthening Families

A community approach
to building resiliency in families
with young children

IN WESTERN NEIGHBORHOODS
OF CINCINNATI

About This Project

Strengthening Families is an initiative to support families and ensure the wellness of children. Focusing on Cheviot and Westwood, it introduces a new child abuse and neglect prevention approach to early care and education.

More than 750 early care and education programs nationwide now use the Strengthening Families approach. Based on research from the Center for the Study of Social Policy in Washington, D.C., it helps child care providers work with parents to build five protective factors (see green panel). These factors have been shown to reduce the likelihood of child abuse and neglect and create an environment children need for optimal development.



Wilda Evans, family child care provider (left) and Christine Bull, Santa Maria Community Services coach read to a child during a specialized coaching visit.

To Get Involved...

Contact Carolyn Brinkmann, project manager, at 513-758-1314, or cbrinkmann@4cforchildren.org



Carolyn Brinkmann, 4C project manager (far left) talks with Kelli Banks and Dayna Coleman at St. James Day Care Center in Westwood.

First Step: Build a Network

Eight child care centers and 15 family child care providers from Cheviot and Westwood form the Strengthening Families network. This network will support child care providers as they reach parents and children with strategies for success:

- facilitating friendships and mutual support
- strengthening parenting
- responding to family crises
- linking families to services and opportunities
- valuing and supporting parents
- facilitating children's social and emotional development
- observing and responding to early warning signs of abuse or neglect.

Next Step: Join a Parent Café

Parent cafés are scheduled in the community for parents to gather in small groups and engage in meaningful conversations around keeping families strong. The goal is to encourage parents to share their wisdom and resources.

Benefits for the Community

The Strengthening Families initiative will serve the community in the following ways:

- **provide specialized coaching and workshops** to child care centers and family child care providers.
- **offer networking and learning opportunities** for child care centers and providers to access community and family resources while developing the ability to reach out to families in need.
- **support parents in building social supports** needed to ensure the wellness of their family and children.
- **build community capacity to engage families** by building resources and responses that support child safety and enhance the wellness of children and the ability of families to cope with stress.
- **launch an awareness campaign** designed to build upon the strengths of the community and increase awareness of and support for the five protective factors.



Dayna Coleman (left) and Carolyn Brinkmann with children at St. James Day Care Center in Westwood.